



Special **ELECTIONS** REPORT

2011 FEDERAL ELECTIONS

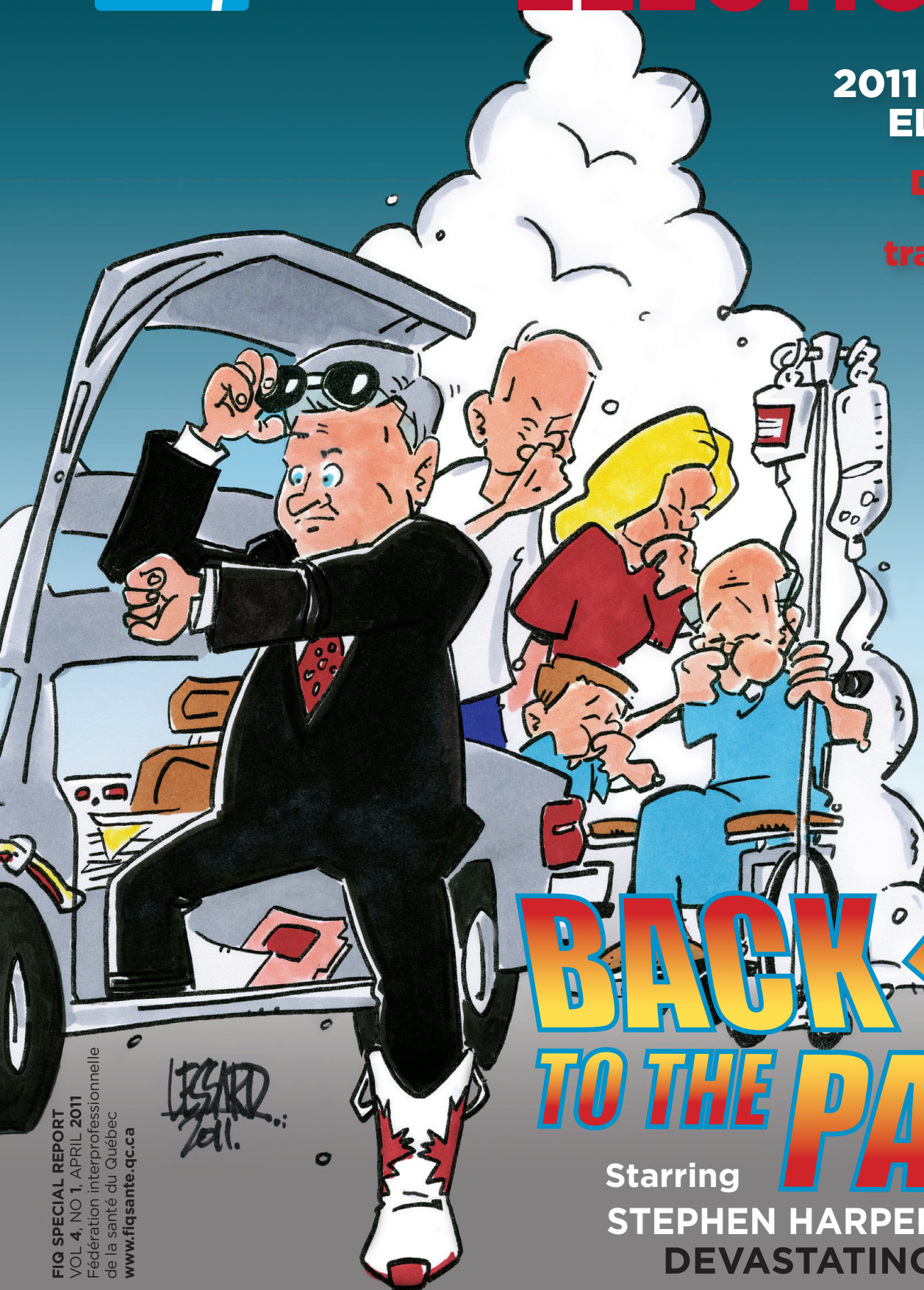
Democracy, ethics and transparency

Social policies

Women

Human rights and freedom

Economy and public finances



BACK ← **TO THE PAST**

Starring
STEPHEN HARPER AND HIS DEVASTATING RECORD

Special **FEDERAL ELECTIONS 2011** REPORT

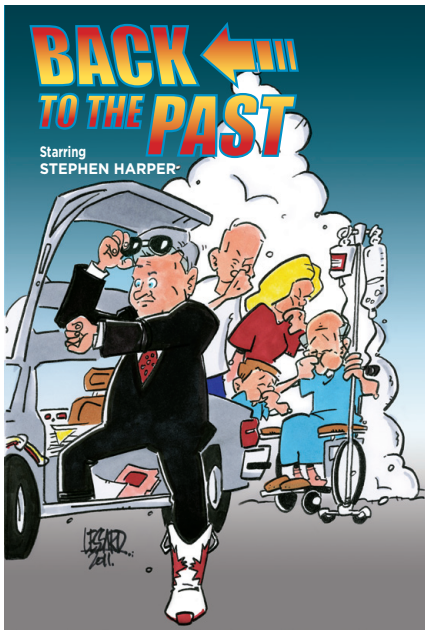
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Editor's note

The FIQ offers its members the *FIQ Special Report* in the context of federal or provincial elections. Contrary to past elections and in view of the considerable issues of the current federal election, the FIQ has not done a comparative analysis of the election platforms of the different parties.

In this *FIQ Special Election Report 2011*, the FIQ offers a critical look at the Conservatives' years in power. It hopes that the FIQ's 60,000 member healthcare professionals will realize that the rollbacks imposed by Stephen Harper's government are unacceptable to them as women, workers and citizens. ■

President's message



Imagine the disaster if, on the evening of May 2, we find ourselves with a majority Conservative government, or even a minority government. We strongly hope that the expression "everything comes in threes" doesn't happen. It is high time to end this masquerade.

On May 2, we must go to the polls to elect the federal government which will rule the Canadian Parliament over the next few years. All elections are important, but this one takes on a special, even crucial, nature because there is a risk of dire consequences on the society in which we want to live.

Over the last few years we have noticed a rise in right-wing politics in the National Assembly, but it must be said that the situation in Quebec does not compare with the one that prevails on the federal scene. In 2006, when Stephen Harper's Conservatives took power, we were a long way from thinking this wanton destruction would reach such proportions.

Stephen Harper's Conservatives have behaved as if they are the only ones in the world. Never, in the history of the Chamber of Commons, has a government been ousted for contempt of Parliament. Never has a government behaved in such a cavalier and ludicrous manner ignoring the basic rules of democracy, in which political institutions base their legitimacy on a right-wing State and respect of the public's votes.

The assessment of the Conservative Party's years in power is alarming! What's more, the damages that they are responsible for are from when they headed a minority government. Imagine the disaster if, on the evening of May 2, we find ourselves with a majority Conservative government, or even a minority government. We strongly hope that the expression "everything comes in threes" doesn't happen. It is high time to end this masquerade.

The FIQ cannot remain silent faced with such a fact and such eloquent facts. Though not associated to any political party, the Federation is submitting to you in this FIQ Elections Special Report 2011, a devastating assessment of the conservatives' years in power.

The Conservative Party has far from contributed to a fair and egalitarian society. Quite the contrary, under the Conservatives rule, poverty and socioeconomic disparities have continued to grow. It's a good bet that the situation can only get worse in the event that a Conservative government is elected.

This special report will allow you to judge the scope of the damage. You will also be able to see that we must take this opportunity to get rid of this government with reactionary policies lacking the principles of fairness, equity, solidarity and democracy.

Once again, the Federation is suggesting that you use a strategic vote in order to stop the Conservative Party in Quebec and reduce the chances of seeing them in power again to a minimum. Thus, whether it is the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party or even the Green Party, the important thing is to give your vote to the one who can beat the Conservative Party candidate in your riding. This exercise will probably require that you put aside your own convictions, but with great sacrifices, come great rewards.

Don't forget to vote on May 2. Moreover, remember that we can no longer allow ourselves to be led by a party which endangers our acquired rights and advocates values that are diametrically opposed to those of the Federation and the 60,000 healthcare professionals which make up the Federation. Let's get rid of the Conservatives on May 2! ■

Régine Laurent

DEMOCRACY, ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY

In power since 2006, Stephen Harper's Conservative Party has continually thwarted democracy, overturned the rationale of parliamentary institutions, controlled information and ignored the rules of governance. The Conservatives have gotten into trouble repeatedly for their manoeuvres in evading the most elementary rules of a democracy with the aim of imposing their ideology and avoiding accountability to the opposition parties and the public.

In power, Stephen Harper's party has:

- Prorogued the House of Commons twice, shutting down Canada's Parliament;
- Decided unilaterally to extend the mission in Afghanistan;
- Acted contrary to its position on election of Senators by appointing a large number of Conservative Senators, thus ensuring the rejection of certain decisions contrary to its policies, adopted by the elected members of the House of Commons;
- Controlled and deliberately hindered the operation of parliamentary committees and commissions;
- Cut the funding of associations whose opinions are opposed to Conservative ideology, such as groups defending social rights and cultural, ecological and international cooperation groups;
- Refused to specify the costs of purchasing 65 F-35 fighter jets, the government's 18 crime bills and corporate tax cuts;
- Been forced by the Chief Electoral Officer to open its books to shed light on the undeclared amounts used for party financing;
- Manoeuvred to spend \$ 1 million more than the limit permitted in the 2006 election campaign. Fraud charges have been filed against four Conservative Party organizers.
- Established strict media relations rules, gagged some MPs and restricted journalists to a limited number of questions;
- Supported the Minister of International Cooperation, Bev Oda, who had requested alteration of a document granting funding to the humanitarian organization KAIROS.



fiq Comments

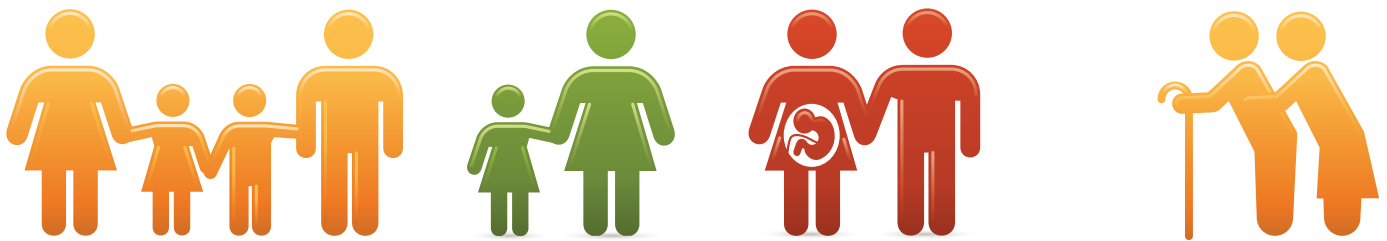
For the Federation, the Conservative Party's strategy is clear: if it can't impose its ideas or manipulate its pawns as it sees fit, it evades the rules or brushes off anything that gets in its way. The FIQ considers that such an attitude is unacceptable and profoundly antidemocratic, preventing independence, thwarting checks and balances and thus blocking the exercise of counterpower. The Conservative Party's fixation on controlling information is an infringement of the public's right to obtain accurate and complete information. Even worse, the Conservative Party often refuses to give all the Members of the House of Commons all the necessary information to make informed decisions. This behaviour shows contempt! A party that engages in such manoeuvres to escape its obligation of accountability doesn't deserve the public's confidence. ■

SOCIAL POLICIES

The absence of social policies and measures for workers in Conservative ideology is staggering. For the Conservative Party, it is not up to the State to intervene to ensure the public's minimum welfare. The policies proposed by the Conservatives have the effect of promoting individualism to the detriment of social protection, thus accentuating the gaps between rich and poor.

In power, Stephen Harper's party has:

- Abolished funding for the construction and renovation of social housing;
- Cancelled the child care funding agreements with the provinces, replacing them with a taxable benefit of \$100/month;
- Refused to review access to the employment insurance plan when only 43.6% of unemployed individuals have access to this plan. Access is especially difficult for women because they often hold part-time jobs or jobs without job security;
- Refused to correct the deficiencies in certain programmes with the result that workers find themselves in Canada without adequate protective measures;
- Removed the obligation to answer the long-form census, with the result that the government no longer has all the data to produce a detailed picture of the Canadian population's socio-economic situation to allow a proper evaluation of the impact of social policies.



fiq Comments

The Federation considers that it is the federal government's responsibility to intervene in order to reduce social inequalities, particularly by granting the necessary funds to the provinces to allow them to fund social programs adequately. It is important to mention that the Conservatives have taken the insidious tangent of opting for budget measures favouring the richest taxpayers. The proliferation of measures such as tax credits is eloquent proof of this. To benefit from these credits, you have to earn enough money to pay taxes!

Regarding health, the FIQ must mention that, ever since it has been in power, Stephen Harper's government has not really had to commit itself publicly. The Health Transfer Agreement with the provinces was signed before it came to power and will expire in 2014. However, the Conservative Party has openly defended guaranteed access as a solution to the problems of access to health care. The FIQ considers that this position encourages privatization and represents a real threat to the public health system in Quebec. ■

WOMEN



Twice heading a minority government, the Conservative Party has succeeded in rolling back women's rights here and abroad. The close ties maintained by several Conservative Ministers with the extreme religious right are an open secret. Many lobbyists from the religious right have access to the Government of Canada. For example, the ultrareligious pressure group, the Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC), which campaigns actively against gay rights and against the right to abortion has met with Harper Government Ministers and MPs on several occasions.

In power, Stephen Harper's party has:

- Seen four of its Conservative MPs table private member's bills for recognition of human life at conception and the granting of rights to the fetus;
- Launched a mother and child health initiative at the G-8 excluding contraception and abortion services. Numerous pressures finally led the Conservatives to include family planning, but they refused to entrench abortion;
- Accepted that several of its MPs could be part of the Pro-Life Caucus in Ottawa, a group actively campaigning against the right of women to control their own bodies;
- Closed 12 of the 16 offices of Status of Women Canada (SWC) and reduced its operating budget by 43%;
- Made major cuts to the funding of women's groups, such as the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), the *Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale* (AFEAS) and the *Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail* (CIAFT);
- Abolished the Court Challenges Program, which was intended to defend cases regarding rights and equality;
- Abolished the possibility for federal public servants to resort to the pay equity mechanisms set out in the Canadian Human Rights Act, thus putting pay equity into the hands of the employers who have to negotiate with the unions based on payroll.

fiq Comments

For the Federation, the Conservative Party's policies are a direct attack on women's rights and result in unacceptable rollbacks. This party constantly attacks the governmental and non-government organizations that women have adopted over the past forty years to be able to defend their rights and advance their struggle for equality. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

In matters of justice, the Conservative Party prefers repression to crime prevention and rehabilitation. This party's years in power clearly show that rights and freedoms are not on the list of its concerns.

In power, Stephen Harper's party has:

- Tabled a bill to abolish the Long Gun Registry, which includes rifles and shotguns. This bill was rejected by a small majority in the House of Commons;
- Removed the reference decriminalization of homosexuality from the Immigration and Citizenship Guide;
- Refused repeatedly to respect the right of Canadians detained abroad to be transferred to a Canadian prison. The rate of acceptance of these transfers fell from 98% in 2005-2006 to 27% in 2009-2010;
- Denied the demands of minority groups when, in 2006, Canada voted against the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Canada only signed this Declaration in 2010, without announcing concrete measures that can improve the situation of these groups.
- Adopted laws to lengthen prison terms for serious crimes committed with firearms;
- Eliminated the rule that time in pre-sentencing custody counts for double the time of imprisonment;
- Attempted to adopt a bill to impose harsher sentences on adolescents who have committed serious crimes.

fiq Comments

For the Federation, it is the duty and responsibility of the federal government to ensure compliance with the rights and freedoms of all its citizens. The Conservative Party's attitude in this matter is unacceptable and has the appearance of vengeance. This party constantly lengthens the penalties when it has been clearly proven that the severity of the penalty has no impact on the crime rate. Moreover, the Conservatives' obsession with abolishing the Long Gun Registry makes no sense given that, since the creation of this registry, there has been an average decrease in suicides and homicides by firearms in Canada. Many police associations across Canada have called for the maintenance of this registry. ■

ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCES

In economic matters, the Conservative Party boasts of being "the" specialist in the economy. However, it fails to specify that its vision of the economy is one where government intervention must be reduced to its simplest expression. The individual values put in the forefront by the Conservatives have serious repercussions for the economy and public finances. We should remember that in 2008, during the economic and financial crisis, the Conservatives had not provided for any recovery plan. The opposition parties had to press the government before it decided to inject \$48 billion to support the economy. Today, these same Conservatives have the nerve to appropriate the benefits of and credit for this recovery plan, which allowed Canada to come out of the recession in a relatively good position.



In power, Stephen Harper's party has:

- Reduced the GST, thus giving up \$30 billion in revenue since 2008;
- Reduced corporate taxation;
- Maintained silence about its intention to carry on transfers to the provinces earmarked for social programs;
- Committed \$29.3 billion for the purchase of 65 F-35 fighter jets;
- Spent over one billion dollars on security at the G-8 and G20 Summits;
- Allocated \$20.6 billion in 2010 to the Department of Defence budget;
- Dragged out the discussions with Quebec on harmonization of the sales tax, depriving Quebec of \$2.2 billion;
- Closed its eyes to tax havens.

fiq Comments

For the Federation, it is not normal that the Canadian public account for half of the federal government's revenues, while the private corporate contribution is declining. The Conservative Party is committing to mindboggling expenses to purchase fighter jets or security fences, but claims that it has no money to ensure public services. What's wrong with this picture? The Conservative government's political choices on the economy and public finances are in profound contradiction with the values of social justice and redistribution of wealth advocated by the FIQ. ■

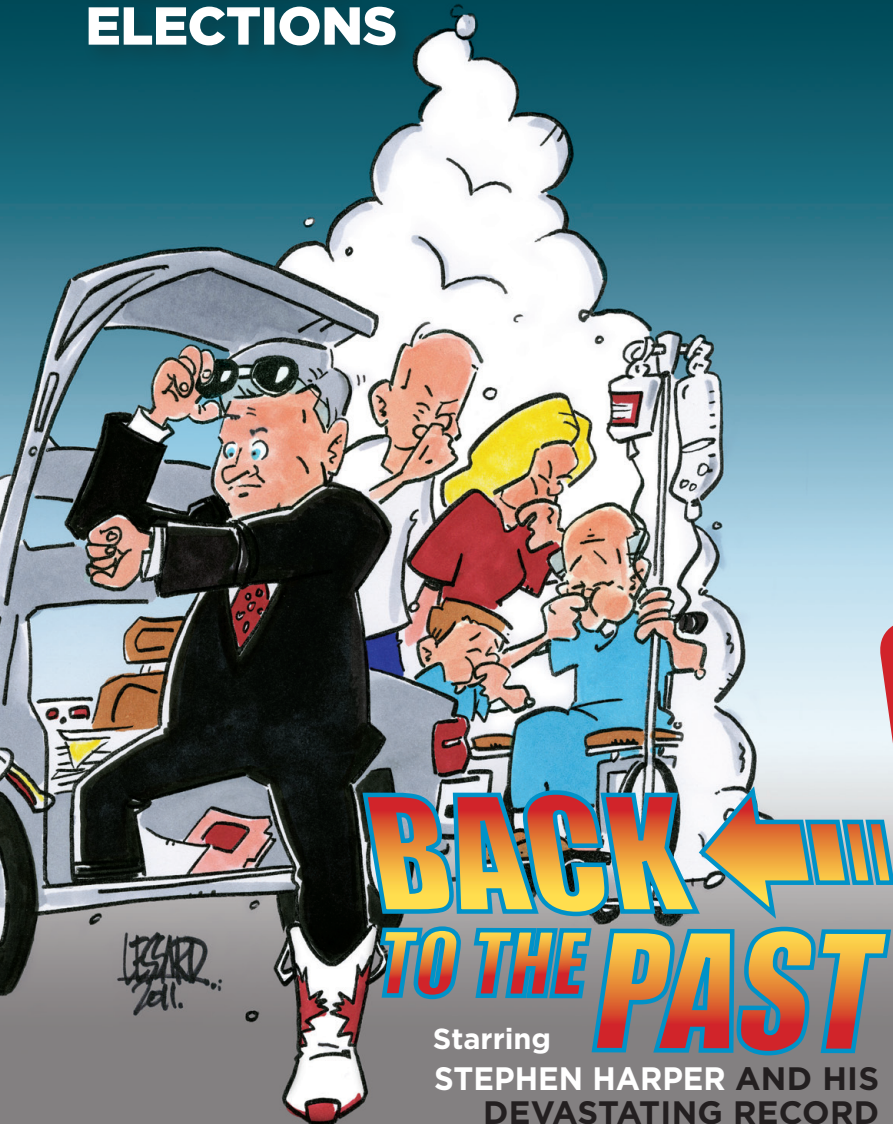


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2011 FEDERAL ELECTIONS



The Conservative Party follows the thinking of the religious right, whose solutions to all social ills are based on a return to traditional values and the “natural” order. In the family realm, this means that the man is the head of the family, while the woman looks after the home. In the social realm, this means reducing government intervention, thus putting an end to social solidarity, and leaving it up to individuals to make their own place in the sun.

**On May 2,
let's reject this
return to the past
and get rid of the
Conservative Party!**

The **fiq**
**A strong voice,
actions that count**

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